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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 4 March 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to perpetrate war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian people as the occupying forces continue to launch assaults and raids against civilian areas throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. With the continuation and escalation of this Israeli military campaign, the casualties and destruction being endured by the Palestinian people continue to mount dramatically. In this regard, it is my deepest regret to inform you that the number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 has now tragically surpassed 2,200. These martyrs include Palestinian men, women and children from every sector and every generation of our society.

In the most recent attacks against the Palestinian civilian population, the Israeli occupying forces have killed at least 24 Palestinians, including a pregnant mother and several children. This most recent wave of Israeli attacks began on Sunday, 2 March, with an Israeli assault on Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. During that assault, the Israeli occupying forces killed three Palestinians and wounded more than 10 others. This was followed by the invasion of the Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip yesterday, 3 March 2003, in which dozens of Israeli tanks and armoured personnel carriers, backed by helicopter gunships, raided the camp, killing at least eight Palestinians and wounding many others. Among those killed was a 33-year-old Palestinian woman, Nooha Swidan Al-Makadmeh, who was in her ninth month of pregnancy. She was killed, while cradling and protecting her two-year-old daughter, when she was crushed to death in her home as Israeli occupying forces blew up homes during the assault on the camp. The woman died before reaching hospital as neighbours carried her on foot to a clinic while the occupying forces prevented ambulances from reaching the area to treat the wounded. Six other members of Mrs. Makadmeh's family were also wounded in the attack, including her husband and two young sons. Further, among the several other Palestinians killed yesterday by the Israeli occupying forces were two young Palestinian boys.

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During this same attack on the Bureij refugee camp, the Israeli occupying forces caused extensive destruction to homes and infrastructure. The occupying forces deliberately demolished four homes in the camp and damaged at least 11 other houses, rendering them completely uninhabitable, and leaving almost 150 people homeless. Moreover, the occupying forces caused damage to a nearby mosque and violated its sanctity when they entered it, purportedly to search for weapons. Windows of the mosque were smashed, and several bullet holes, identified as helicopter gunfire, were found in its walls. Several copies of the Koran were found damaged on the floor.

In recent days, the Israeli occupying forces have also carried out assaults in other towns and cities throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Nablus area. One Palestinian man, Mohammed Hassan Ali Abdellatif Issa, was killed when he was shot yesterday by the occupying forces at a checkpoint in Nablus. He bled to death before reaching the hospital. Further, yesterday, the occupying forces continued to take over homes and buildings in the Old City of Nablus and took measures to block entrances to the area. During this raid on Nablus, the occupying forces abducted and detained several Palestinians, in addition to the many others detained in Ramallah, Jenin and in the vicinity of Al-Khalil. It has been reported in this regard that more than 45 Palestinians have been detained by the Israeli occupying forces over the past 24 hours alone. At the same time, recent days have witnessed more incidents of Israeli settler violence and harassment targeting Palestinian civilians. Today, a Palestinian boy, aged 14, was shot in the stomach by illegal Israeli colonial settlers firing from a car at a group of Palestinians in the village of Asawya near Nablus. This attack was preceded yesterday by settler attacks on several Palestinian homes in the area.

All of the above-mentioned cannot be considered just part of a routine list of the daily events taking place in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. These acts perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law. Indeed, these acts, including, inter alia, the wilful killings of civilians, the wanton destruction of property, the illegal detention of persons and the collective punishment of the entire civilian population, constitute war crimes and atrocities by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. These crimes and atrocities have continued unabated since the onset of this vicious Israeli military campaign in September of 2000. Clearly, without urgent intervention by the international community to address this ongoing crisis, the bloodshed and suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces will continue. A lack of political will and continued complacency by the international community in this regard will only allow Israel, the occupying Power, to continue to act with impunity, with mounting losses and hardship for the Palestinian people as a result.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 159 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 24 February 2003 (A/ES-10/219-S/2003/207), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my regret to inform you that, since our last letter to you, the Israeli occupying forces have killed at least 24 Palestinians, including children, raising the total number of Palestinian martyrs to 2,203. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified thus far are contained in the annex to the present letter.)

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as an official document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Annex to the identical letters dated 4 March 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Monday, 24 February 2003, to Tuesday, 4 March 2003)

Monday, 24 February 2003

1. Mohammed Mahmoud Mohammed Al-Mismi
2. Abdullah Mohammed Alsaba' Al-Kafarneh
3. Mohammed Mahmoud Saleh Houwaiti

Tuesday, 25 February 2003

1. Ala'a Jawdat Mahmoud Abu Sharkh
2. Ahmed Khalil Abu Elwan (13 years old)

Wednesday, 26 February 2003

1. Fathi Mahmoud Saleh Abu Jibareh

Friday, 28 February 2003

1. Mohammed Yussef Ahmed Al-'Aloul

Sunday, 2 March 2003

1. Mohammed Mare'i Abdelhady
2. Abdullah Deeb Al-Asar
3. Abdelrahman Mustafa Jadallah (9 years old)
4. Aziza Deeb Ali Al-Qaseer Barakat

Monday, 3 March 2003

1. Tarik Saidi 'Aqel (13 years old)
2. Nooha Swidan Al-Makadmeh
3. Mohammed Ali Al-Babli
4. Fadi Fayez Al-Hawagri
5. Mutasem Hamed 'Aqel
6. Maher Mohammed Al-Rifae'
7. Waleed Abdellatif Al-Khatib
8. Rami Mohammed Yussef Awad
9. Najwan Mohammed Al-Salihi (17 years old)
10. Mohammed Hassan Ali Abdellatif Issa

Tuesday, 4 March 2003

1. Hisham Mohammed Mahmoud Amr (18 years old)
2. Abdullah Al-Ashhab
3. Basil Ali Abbas

* The total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 2,203.